



Town of Andover, Connecticut

Office of the First Selectman
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February 2, 2009

The Honorable Members of the House of Representatives
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, Connecticut

Re: HB 5379 – Introduced by Rep. Pamela Z. Sawyer

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The legislature in recent months has placed in jeopardy one of the fine services provided to residents, the town web sites. Particularly in small towns this electronic media keeps our townspeople informed on local events and activities of town government in a way not covered by the local press or any other forms of public communication.

The recent mandated, unfunded bill which requires that all minutes be placed on the website is an expense that small towns cannot afford. Presently these websites are manned by volunteers, who meet, at best, on a monthly basis. The requirement that motions be posted in 48 hours and minutes be posted in five days would require a full time web master with IT experience. This is not a job that can be handled by any of our present staff.

At present the Andover Board of Selectmen has voted to shut down the town sponsored website because we have already experienced residents that will take the town to FOI for virtually any reason. The cost of being brought before FOI is approximately \$1,000 in legal fees for each complaint. Under the present requirement all boards and sub-committees, which in our town are volunteer boards, would be under the limited timeframe of completing these minutes, conveying them to the webmaster who in turn has a very limited time frame for positing such items.

Your consideration of legislation modifying or even eliminating the requirement to post these minutes would be welcomed in our community and I'm sure in most small towns which utilize these websites to keep in contact with their citizens.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert F. Burbank
First Selectman